

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A method for making retaining net knots, wherein a knot comprises a first and a second rope crossing over each other and a junction binding said ropes in a given crossover area, said ropes having the same rope diameter,

the method comprising the steps of:

placing a first U-shaped element having a curved base and a second U-shaped element having a curved base positioned side-by-side astride said first rope, each U-shaped element with the same orientation at a distance from one another approximately equal to the rope diameter so that they lie close to said second rope on opposite sides thereof;

linking ends of the first U-shaped element to ends of the second U-shaped element by means of at least one bridge element overlying said second rope; and

clamping with a clamping means said at least one bridge element on said second rope,

wherein, during the clamping step by the action of the clamping means, the ropes press each other at their crossover area, because of the displacement of contacting rope strands, reducing the overall thickness of the first and second ropes pressed together to 1 to 4/3 of the rope diameter in such a way that the ropes are forced to lie substantially in the same plane at each knot of the net, and

wherein the curvature of the curved base[[s]] of each U-shaped element is semicircular, with an intrados radius of approximately one half the rope diameter.

2. (Currently amended) A knot of a retaining net ~~of the type~~ comprising a first and a second rope crossing over each other and a junction for binding the ropes together, said ropes having the same rope diameter, wherein said junction comprises:

a first U-shaped element having a curved base and wings and a second U-shaped element having a curved base and wings positioned side-by-side astride said first rope, each U-shaped

element with equally oriented wings at a distance from one another approximately equal to the rope diameter so that they lie close to the second rope on opposite sides thereof;

at least one bridge element linking ends of the wings of the first U-shaped element to adjacent ends of the wings of the second U-shaped element, and overlying the second rope; and

clamping means for clamping said at least one bridge element on the second rope,

wherein the bridge element comprises an arch which merges with the adjacent ends of the first and second U-shaped elements and is integral with the first and second U-shaped elements to form a unique piece, and

wherein said unique piece has a given distance measured between a tangent line at an intrados of an arch of the bridge element and the plane defined by tangent lines at the intrados of curved bases of the first U-shaped element and the second U-shaped element,

wherein said given distance is between 1 and $4/3$ of the rope diameter, and

wherein the curvature of the curved base[[s]] of each of the first and second U-shaped elements is semicircular, with an intrados radius of approximately one half of the rope diameter,

wherein the clamping means comprises at least one of:

two nuts screwed on the ends of two wings of said U-shaped elements; and

two heads formed through riveting, the heads corresponding to the ends of two wings of said U-shaped elements.

3-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein said bridge element comprises a yoke linking an end of a wing of the first U-shaped element to an adjacent end of a wing of the second U-shaped element.

6-7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently amended) A junction for binding two ropes together in a knot of a retaining net, said ropes having the same rope diameter, the junction comprising:

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a first U-shaped element having a curved base and wings and a second U-shaped element having a curved base and wings, positioned side-by-side and equally oriented, at a distance from one another approximately equal to the rope diameter;

at least one bridge element linking the ends of the first U-shaped element to the adjacent ends of the second U-shaped element, used to close the U-shaped elements, and

clamping means of said at least one bridge element,

wherein the at least one bridge element comprises an arch which merges with the adjacent ends of the first and second U-shaped elements and is integral with the first and second U-shaped elements to form a unique piece,

wherein said unique piece has a given distance measured between a tangent line at an intrados of an arch of the bridge element and the plane defined by tangent lines at the intrados of curved bases of the first U-shaped element and the second U-shaped element,

wherein said given distance is between 1 and $4/3$ of the rope diameter, and

wherein the curvature of the curved base[[s]] of each of the first and second U-shaped elements is semicircular, with an intrados radius of approximately one half of the rope diameter,

wherein the clamping means comprises at least one of:

two nuts screwed on the ends of two wings of said U-shaped elements; and

two heads formed through riveting, the heads corresponding to the ends of two wings of said U-shaped elements.

9-15. (Cancelled)